

THE * NONCONFORMIST * MUSICAL * JOURNAL

A MONTHLY RECORD AND REVIEW
DEVOTED TO THE INTERESTS OF WORSHIP MUSIC IN THE NONCONFORMIST CHURCHES.

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The "Musical Herald" and the Nonconformist Choir Union.

THE *Musical Herald* for July concluded its report of the recent Crystal Palace Festival as follows:—

"There are rumours of some dissatisfaction in the Union. It is difficult to make a large representative body move together, and this can only be done by patience and willingness to consult and postpone on the part of the leaders. At the same time, dissenters should be careful not to dissent among themselves, or preserve a nonconforming attitude towards the authorities they have chosen. We believe that the Union will amicably settle all its difficulties."

What our esteemed contemporary meant, or to what the second sentence referred, was a complete mystery. "Rumours of some dissatisfaction" had certainly not reached the ears of those responsible for the management of the affairs of the Union; the parties who had been impatient and unwilling "to consult" or "postpone" were unknown; and what it was that ought to have been postponed no

one could conceive. The charge was so curiously expressed, and altogether so vague and indefinite, that it was impossible to discover what the exact nature of it was.

Mr. Croger, the Hon. Secretary of the Union, therefore waited upon the Editor of the *Herald* and asked for an explanation. Mr. Curwen's reply was to the effect that information received led him to suppose that discontent existed within the Executive Committee. This Mr. Croger at once emphatically denied as entirely unfounded.

A meeting of the Committee was therefore called to consider the matter, and every member was requested to send his opinion of the paragraph if unable to attend personally. The result was that all the members, with one exception (and he expressed no opinion one way or the other), either verbally or in writing distinctly stated that they were unaware of any "dissatisfaction" or of any foundation whatever for the report. The only possible conclusion, therefore, was that, if "dissatisfaction" was really felt anywhere, it *must* be by the only gentleman who remained silent on the subject. But as he had taken an enthusiastic interest in the Union, and more especially as owing to pressure of work he had unfortunately been able to attend very few of the committee meetings, it was felt that he could not possibly complain of not having been consulted.

It is clear, therefore, that the *Herald* has been misinformed. As the Editor is much interested in Nonconformist church music and also in the Choir Union, we have no doubt the paragraph was inserted with the best intentions. It would, however, have been wiser and kinder to have made some inquiries before publishing a statement which might possibly imperil the usefulness of the Union.

Never has the Union been so prosperous as it is at the present moment, and never have more cordial and harmonious relations existed amongst those who conduct its affairs.

We entirely agree with the *Herald* when it says, "We believe the Union will amicably settle all its difficulties"—when those "difficulties" arise. At present, happily, they are quite unknown.

Prize Competition.

WE offer a prize of Two Guineas for the best Christmas Anthem.

The following are the conditions:—

1. Compositions must be sent to our office not later than September 1st, 1892.
2. Each composition must be marked with a *nom de plume*, and must be accompanied by a sealed envelope containing the name and address of the composer.
3. The anthem, when printed, must not occupy less than four or more than six pages, octavo size. The intention is to publish the successful composition in the "Popular Anthem" Series. Solos are allowed.
4. The successful anthem shall become our copyright on payment of the prize.

5. Unsuccessful compositions will be returned if stamped addressed envelopes are sent us for that purpose.

6. We reserve the right to withhold the prize should we consider there is no composition of sufficient merit.

7. Our decision in all matters relating to the competition shall be final.

IN another column will be found a letter from a correspondent who suggests that we should publish a "Contents Bill" every month, which choirmasters might hang up in the choir practice room and in the vestibules of chapels. If any of our friends fall in with this idea, we shall be glad to hear from them.

COPIES of the Prize Harvest Anthem, "Fear not, O Land," by Arthur Berridge, which appeared in our last issue, can be obtained at our office.

THE *Literary Churchman* has a sensible article on "Country Choirs." It points out that the chief use of a choir is not only to sing, but to *sing well*, and if it fails to do this, its utility is very small indeed.

THE writer considers that a choir may be useful in other ways than leading the singing. If rightly placed and reverently behaved, a choir suggests heaven by the ideas it seems to embody of unity, harmony, obedience, and order. Further, a choir is a connecting link between minister and people. The members of the choir being usually drawn from the general body of parishioners, they are of great service in keeping the pastor in touch with the various families. Members of a choir, too, can convey useful parish information to the clergyman which he could otherwise probably not obtain.

REFERRING to the constitution of a choir, the article goes on to say that, though men and boys are upon the whole preferable, there is no sound reason why female singers should not be made use of, provided quiet and unobtrusive dress be insisted upon, and the fashions are duly kept in the background.

MUCH importance is placed on the desirability of every choir member being a communicant. If the choir cannot be above the level of the congregation they lead to the Throne of Grace, they should not, at all events, be so conspicuously below a large portion of it, as practical rejection of one of the Sacraments makes them to be.

IN reference to the relationship between the clergyman and the organist, the writer considers that the former should have absolute control over the latter, but gently applied,—applied, in fact, *diffidently* in the matter of the music itself, unless the vicar possesses a competent knowledge of

music; but most firmly and decisively in the choice of the words that are to be sung; though even here it will be well to bear in mind that the music accompanying a particular hymn may not, in the better knowledge of the organist, be practicable for the choir he has to do with. And even a musical vicar had better present the appearance of helping, rather than superseding, the organist at practice (giving his directions to the latter in private as freely as he likes), remembering that an organist needs all the authority as well as tact he can muster to keep his team in hand.

DURING the summer holidays many organists require substitutes to take their Sunday duties. We are frequently asked to recommend such. Gentlemen open to undertake engagements of this kind might communicate with us at once.

A MUSICAL and Ecclesiastical Art Exhibition of much interest will shortly be opened at the Royal Aquarium.

The Christianity of the Leipzig Cantor.

BY ORLANDO A. MANSFIELD, MUS. DOC. T.C.T., F.C.O.,
L. MUS. T.C.L., L. MUS. L.C.M.;

Author of "À Quatre Mains," "The King and Queen of Instruments," "The Hymn Tunes of the late Henry Smart," etc., etc.

THERE are many who would wish us to believe that the character of a composer has no practical bearing upon his productions, and cannot therefore be a subject of interest or importance. But, like all rash assertions, this statement is more or less belied by facts. Who, for instance, would admit that Rossini, with his inherent coarseness and vulgarity, could have produced works equal in classic elegance and polished grace to those of the refined and cultured Mendelssohn? Or who could assert that the ruggedness of Beethoven and the sentimental effeminacy of Chopin are not faithfully depicted in their pianoforte compositions? We take it, therefore, that, although there are doubtless exceptions to this as to every other rule, the fact remains that the works of the great masters were largely affected by the characters and environments of their composers. Hence the study of a composer's character cannot be valueless, but rather tends to the discovery in his compositions of many a hidden beauty and unsuspected meaning. And equally true is the converse of the theorem we have been demonstrating. A composer, to be successful, *i.e.*, to produce works which shall stand the test of ages, must have special mental characteristics or a certain amount of moral preparedness for his work. Consequently the successful composer for the Church must ever be possessed of those higher gifts of devotion and reverence without which his works, although they please, can never entirely satisfy the attentive, intellectual, and devout listener.

Perhaps in no musical character is the above conclusion more abundantly verified than in that of Johann

Sebastian Bach. Of his sacred compositions the late Professor Ritter writes: "He embodied in his works the spiritual life and expression which has taken root in the mystic creed of his Church. . . . He penetrates the spiritual depth of Holy Writ, intensifies its sense by means of his incomparable art, transfigures it in tone until its whole meaning is revealed. Bach's church music is a perfect exposition of the text which forms its foundation. . . . The power which he possessed of instantaneously placing himself in the frame of mind required by the exigencies of the text he had to set to music must have been astonishing." Granted that for the production of the higher forms of sacred music there is needed on the part of the composer the possession of a lofty morality and a deeply rooted faith, it will be the object of this article to show, from the pages of biography and criticism, to how great an extent these qualities were possessed by the illustrious Leipsic cantor.

We take first of all the testimony of Herr Maczewski. He says: "All the family traits and qualities of the Bachs stand out in Johann Sebastian with full decision and typical clearness: a deeply religious sentiment, which, though in many points closely approaching the pietism then developing itself, yet adhered with a certain naive severity to the traditional, orthodox, family views; a truly wonderful moral force, which, without any show, embraced the problem of life in its deepest sense; and a touching patriarchal spirit, which was satisfied with humble circumstances, rejoiced in the blessing of an unusually numerous family, and regarded the family life as the chief *raison d'être*. With and above all this there was an artistic striving, founded exclusively upon ideal views, and directed with complete self-forgetfulness to ideal aims alone." For confirmation of the last sentence of this masterly summary, it may not be out of place to quote Bach's own words. When, in his extreme old age, he was questioned as to how he came in possession of his great learning and inexhaustible storehouse of ideas, he replied, "Through unremitting toil, by constant analysis, by reflection and much writing. This, and this only, is the secret of my knowledge."

But apart from possessing moral qualities of no mean order, the published correspondence of the great master conclusively proves his devout recognition of and complete reliance upon a Divine Providence and an unseen Disposer of events. Writing to the town council at Mühlhausen, with reference to his intended removal to Weimar, he says: "Now God has so ordered it that a change has unexpectedly been put into my hands." Again, in 1730, he wrote from Leipsic to his friend Erdmann: "It pleased God that I should be called to be cantor to the Thomasschule in this place. . . . I ventured upon it in the name of the Most High, and here, by God's pleasure, I remain to this day." Then after enumerating some disadvantages pertaining to his Leipsic appointment, he continues: "I feel compelled, with God's assistance, to seek fortune elsewhere." Providence, however, had decreed that his last days should be spent at Leipsic; but in view of his multifarious duties and inadequate salary, we need not question the statement of Gumprecht to the effect that,

"if any man served his art for the love of God, truly it was Johann Sebastian Bach."

A beautiful testimony to the character of Bach is given by a writer in the *Athenæum*, who says of the illustrious composer: "He was always a great musician, and something more—an earnest man, and mighty in the outpouring of high thought and assured belief. He had the 'clean hand' and the 'pure heart,' and everything was gathered and governed to the loving elevation of his subject." Another writer of lesser note, after quoting the testimony of Bach's countrymen that "his character had not a spot, his life was perfect," goes on to say that "few more God-fearing, single-minded, earnest, modest, and manly men ever lived."

The piety of Bach was strikingly displayed in his home life. His devotion to his wife and family and his solicitude for their welfare are points upon which the testimony of all his biographers agrees. Devotional exercises formed a part of his home life. Around the family altar his numerous household assembled daily, so that the beautiful and well-known picture "Morning Prayer in Bach's House" is not altogether the outcome of the artist's imagination. The closing scene of Bach's life was in exact harmony with his former piety. His last act was to instruct his son-in-law, Altnikol, to make certain changes in a chorale, "Lord, when we are in direst need," written some time before, requesting him, among other alterations, to change the title to "Before Thy throne with this I come." "So," says Mr. Bennett, "was his final effort devoted to the cause of religion, and at a quarter to nine o'clock on the evening of July 28th, 1750, he departed to receive the reward of his labours." Of him, as of our own Purcell, it can truly be said, "gone to that blessed place where alone his harmony can be exceeded."

As to Bach's theological opinions there can be no doubt. One of his ancestors suffered for his devotion to the Lutheran cause, and Bach was not ashamed of the faith of his fathers. Says a writer already quoted: "While some of his fellow Lutherans might take exception to the concession which Bach made in writing music for the Roman Catholic Church, none questioned his firm adherence to the church of his fathers, any more than his sincere and practical piety." None but a true Protestant could have written works which have been described as "the glorification of Protestantism." The religious bent of the master's intellect is evinced by the contents of his library, which included, *inter alia*, "seventy-four volumes, all on theological subjects," among these being two complete sets of Luther's works.

From the foregoing quotations from the biographies of the great cantor, it will be perceived that here was a man pre-eminently adapted for the production of masterly sacred compositions. And if we inquire as to the degree of success with which he achieved his mission, the verdict of posterity is unanimous in declaring the imperishable value of his works. A man who believed and experienced the reality of religion could, beyond doubt, enter into the deepest feelings of the human heart. Accordingly we believe, with one of his critics, that "there is no joy in counterpoint like that of Sebastian Bach; there is no sorrow in counterpoint like his."



Music at St. George's Road Congregational Church, Bolton.

My visit to this well-known church was made one lovely Sunday evening towards the end of June. It is situated in a busy thoroughfare in one of the largest manufacturing towns in Lancashire.

Bolton is somewhat of a typical town of the populous districts embracing the cotton industry: large mills and works, with their necessary long rows of cottages for employes interspersed with shops and stores. What a great variety in size and design one finds here in the places of worship, —some tasteful and elegant, others much the reverse. As I went along, my mind was busy conjecturing what kind of edifice I should find the one that had to furnish me with materials for this notice. On arriving at my destination, I found it a fairly large stone church in the Gothic style, with a spire, and having a very fine and richly traceried window at what is generally termed the west end in Established churches. As there are no grounds attached to this church, it has no accessories whatever in the way of trees, shrubs, or grass. The fabric is also much discoloured with soot, producing quite a sombre effect. However, on entering the church the contrast is certainly pleasing, the decorations being generally neat and quiet. The interior is spacious and fairly lofty, with two rows of pillars supporting the galleries and roof. There is an elaborate and costly marble pulpit, which was originally made for the late Prince Consort for one of the royal chapels. In addition to this, there is also a reading desk, behind which is a Gothic chair. This was used

at the enthronement of the first Bishop of Manchester. I have no information as to how these have found their way into this church. Behind the pulpit is a lofty arched and galleried recess. This is occupied by the choir, and is an excellent arrangement, musically considered. To the right stands the organ, literally packed into a chamber. I have seldom seen an instrument so badly treated as this with regard to position. When will architects give our church organs sufficient head room? This is a fair instrument (we give the specification in another column), but much of its effect is lost for the reason already given.

As the time for service drew near, the organist and choirmaster, Mr. John Barben, whose portrait accompanies this notice, took his place at the organ, the choir at the same time filing into their seats. The opening voluntary was by Berthold Tours, "*Allegretto Grazioso*," very nicely played indeed, but the solo stops, cornopean and oboe, were not in good tune. Vehicular traffic, and the bell of St. George's Church across the way, proved rather obtrusive during this piece. A fairly large congregation having assembled, the service commenced with the hymn "Praise, my soul, the King of heaven," to Henry Smart's excellent tune *Regent Square*. This was well sung, time and tune being good, with a suitable softening down at the verse "Fatherlike He tends and leads us." After a brief prayer, there were two psalms, "God is our refuge" and "I will lift up mine eyes," sung to Crotch in G and Lawes in C respectively. The latter is surely a favourite with most basses, every advantage being taken of the high setting of the part. I think the chanting here may be termed strictly moderate as regards pace. The organ was used with creditable discrimination, and never unduly preponderated. The lesson was followed by the anthem "If ye love Me," by Maxfield. This is written for a solo bass and chorus. The former was exceedingly well sung by a gentleman in the choir, who not only possesses a good voice, but has distinct enunciation, a most important feature in service music. The choir also were heard to advantage here, nice attention being paid to light and shade. Mr. Barben's organ accompaniment was judicious in every respect. This anthem is easy, pleasing, and devotional, and I can commend it for an occasional anthem to choirs who seek something easy and effective. Following the second lesson we had the hymn "Soldiers of Christ, arise," to tune *Moravia*, which was sung with suitable vigour. Next in order came the *long prayer*, which in this instance did not prove to be the infliction we sometimes hear about. The hymn "Oh! who is like the Mighty One," to a very appropriate tune called *Selwyn*, by James Tilleard, followed, and was rendered with correct expression. Next came the sermon, by the pastor, the Rev. J. R. Wolstenholme, M.A. It was a most excellent one, and was listened to with marked attention. It may be interesting to some readers to learn that the Revs. W. Hope Davison and C. A. Berry were formerly pastors of this church.

The next and last hymn was "Saviour, breathe an evening blessing," admirably and tastefully sung to the tune *Jewson*, another of Tilleard's compositions. This was followed by the Benediction, the Amen being sung. The service was brought to a conclusion by Mr. Barben playing a march in B flat by Silas, somewhat marred by the reeds being much out of tune.

The choir numbered 23 voices, divided as follows :—Trebles, 9; altos, 5; tenors, 4; basses, 5. I was pleased to observe that they were punctual, and their conduct during the service was all that could be desired. They are rather out of balance, and would be better if the male voices were increased. This will be done, I believe. The altos were occasionally a little too prominent; a kindly word would probably correct that. This choir in good hands ought to maintain a creditable position. I am informed that suitable arrangements have been made with that object in view.

The hymn-book was compiled by the Rev. W. Hope Davison, and so far as I could judge from a rapid inspection, he has culled from almost every available source. The book also contains the words of a few anthems, psalms, and canticles, but the latitude for chanting is exceedingly limited, and should be greatly increased. There are several tune-books in use in the choir, and I heard a hint that the general adoption of the new "Hymnal" (complete) would be much appreciated. The Amens are sung at the end of each hymn, but to my taste they are a trifle long drawn out.

I must not omit to mention the organ. It is not in good order, being badly out of tune, and it requires cleaning. The case is well designed, and with its neatly decorated pipes in French grey and gold makes a pleasing picture.

My visit was rendered more interesting from the fact that Mr. Barben would bring his connection of twenty-eight years with this choir to a close at the conclusion of the service. It will be readily conceded that this speaks well for both sides, and I heard it announced, with personal pleasure, that a meeting would be held during the week, at which suitable acknowledgment would be made to Mr. Barben, of such a character as would perpetuate the memory of his long and honourable career as organist and choirmaster to the church. It is also fitting that I should not conclude this notice without mentioning that Mrs. Barben was also withdrawing from the choir, after a membership of over twenty-nine years.

I understand that Mr. Barben's daily occupation renders it no longer possible for him to continue his musical duties at St. George's Road Church.

The Conic Sol-fa Association.

THE eighth choral festival of this association took place at the Crystal Palace on the 9th ult. The day was full of engagements, and was in all respects very successful.

In the morning a choir competition took place, Mr. W. S. Roddie of Inverness being the adjudicator. Five choirs entered, the one from Neath (Mr. S. Arnold,

conductor) being the first prize winner. The Portsmouth Wesleyan won the silver medal, Malmesbury Road, Bow, gaining the bronze medal.

About five thousand children filled the orchestra at half-past one, and under the careful conductorship of Mr. Harding Bonner gave a very excellent concert. The singing was accompanied by a juvenile orchestral band, and remarkably well the youngsters played. Mr. J. Frank Proudman was an efficient accompanist.

In the afternoon a large body of singers from London and the provinces gave the chief concert of the day. The programme opened with a new and very pleasing work by Mr. A. R. Gaul, *Israel*, which will no doubt be often performed by choral societies throughout the country. The performance was an exceedingly good one, and at the close Mr. Gaul was loudly applauded. The second part was miscellaneous, and was ably conducted by Mr. L. C. Venables.

The ear test was a very interesting item in the proceedings. For this a tune was played on the organ, one part at a time. The singers wrote it down as it was played, and afterwards sang it correctly.

Nonconformist Church Organs.

ST. GEORGE'S ROAD CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH, BOLTON.

Built by Messrs. Brindley & Foster.

Great Organ.

	Feet.
1. Double Diapason (closed)	16
2. Open Diapason	8
3. Stopped Diapason	8
4. Gamba	8
5. Principal	4
6. Flute Harmonic	4
7. Fifteenth	2
8. Mixture . . . (4 ranks, including 12th)	—
9. Trumpet	8

Swell Organ.

10. Double Diapason (closed)	16
11. Open Diapason	8
12. Stopped Diapason	8
13. Salicional	8
14. Voix Célestes	8
15. Principal	4
16. Fifteenth	2
17. Mixture . . . (3 ranks)	—
18. Cornopean	8
19. Oboe	8

Choir Organ.

20. Dulciana	8
21. Gedact	8
22. Flute	4
23. Piccolo	2
24. Clarionet (Ten C.)	8

Pedal Organ.

25. Open Diapason	16
26. Bourdon	16
27. Violoncello	8

Couplers.

28. Swell to Great, Reversible Pedal.	30. Great to Pedals, Reversible Pedal.
29. Swell to Pedals.	31. Choir to Pedals.
32. Swell to Choir.	

Tremulant to Swell.

Three Composition Pedals to Great Organ.
Three Composition Pedals to Swell Organ.
Blown by Hydraulic Engine.

Literature and Music.

By J. CUTHBERT HADDEN.

LOOKING through the Rev. John Antes La Trobe's "Music of the Church" the other day, I came upon one or two curious instances of the likes and dislikes of the lights of literature with regard to music which have led me to a closer examination of the interesting subject. To tell the truth, I had some reason for making the inquiry apart altogether from the suggestion drawn from the old author. It was only the other week that one of our best-known literary men wrote to me: "I have always believed that musical people take no interest whatever in literature, and there are many evidences I could put before you to show that my opinion is in the main right." This would be far too sweeping a generalisation to be accepted without challenge if one were directly concerned in a discussion of the matter. But allowing it to stand in the meantime, we may turn our attention for a little to the other side, and see whether or not the tables can be turned on the *littérateurs*. If we could show that most of the knights of the pen took "no interest whatever" in the musical art, we might at once establish a *tu quoque*, and the libeller of our profession would be hoist with his own petard.

A pretty good start might be made with Dr. Johnson, who actually congratulated himself that he had escaped the fascinations of music by being kept without the sphere of its temptation! This feeling of complacency, one might at first conclude, sprang not from indifference, but from the Doctor's extreme susceptibility to musical impressions, which, if early encouraged, might, as he imagined, have surmounted all propriety, and consumed that time which was so well devoted to other and perhaps more remunerative pursuits. But, alas! it seems to have been only a case of defective musical perception—a defect which, as La Trobe remarks, would have been sure enough guard against a too unlimited devotion to the practice of the art. Thus, when we hear our great moralist declare his belief that "if he had learnt music he should have been afraid he would have done nothing else but play," our fears for him immediately subside upon his confession that the extent of his knowledge of music was, that he knew a drum from a trumpet and a bagpipe from a guitar, and upon the evidence of his taste afforded by his fondness for the bagpipe, delighting, as Boswell puts it, "to stand for some time with his ear close to the great drone." After this, who would not regret with the old author that the Dictionary Doctor should have neglected what slight cultivation such a natural infirmity was capable of, from fear of a consequence as remote as that an elephant should be tempted to study and imbibe the metaphysical reasoning of some infidel philosopher from the mere exercise of his instinct?

It was S. T. Coleridge who emphasised in his own case the well-appreciated distinction between an ear for music and a taste for the art. He had no ear whatever—could not, as he said, "sing an air to save my life"; but he had the keenest delight in listening to music, and could tell the difference between a good and a bad composition better than some of our pro-

fessional critics. "Naldi, a good fellow," he says, "remarked to me once at a concert that I did not seem much interested in a piece of Rossini's which had just been performed. I said it sounded to me like nonsense verses. But I could scarcely contain myself when a thing of Beethoven's followed." Here surely was a keenness of musical perception which many a musical amateur might envy!

The cases of Sir Walter Scott and the poet Burns were very much the same. Sir Walter tells us in his autobiography that his mother was anxious he should "at least learn psalmody, but the incurable defects of my voice and ear soon drove my teacher to despair." As a matter of course, he loved the bagpipes and the national music of his country; but in his diary we find this entry: "My little nieces gave us some pretty music. I do not know and cannot utter a note of music, and complicated harmonies seem to me a battle of confused, though pleasing, sounds." A cynic might say that such a taste is as little incomprehensible as that of the African chief who did not care for the concert at all, but was immensely pleased with the tuning of the fiddles. At any rate, see how Burns gives expression to almost the same opinion as the author of "Waverley." "You know," he says, in a letter written to George Thomson in 1793—"You know that my pretensions to musical taste are merely a few of Nature's instincts, untaught and untutored by art. For this reason, many musical compositions, particularly where much of the merit lies in counterpoint, however they may transport and ravish the ears of your *connoisseurs*, affect my simple lug [ear] no otherwise than merely as melodious din. On the other hand, by way of amends, I am delighted with many little melodies which the learned musician despises as insipid and silly." Again, writing to the same correspondent, he says: "Not to compare small things with great, my taste in music is like the mighty Frederick of Prussia's taste in painting: we are told that he frequently admired what the *connoisseurs* decried, and always without any hypocrisy confessed his admiration." And yet Burns was so musical as to get the length of composition in an amateur kind of way; while, like the Ettrick Shepherd—who as a boy managed to save five shillings out of his "herd" wages for the purchase of a fiddle—he played the violin sufficiently well to catch from it the inspiration of the old national melodies to which he sought to compose fresh sets of verses. The man who adapted words to music with so workmanly a hand, as well as with so rich a variety of passion, playfulness, and power, must have had a fine taste in music, while yet having no liking for the classical compositions of the great masters.

The musical capacities of Charles Lamb have been sufficiently described by himself in that chatty "Chapter on Ears" in the Essays of Elia. He had the courage to admit that he was utterly incapable of deriving the least pleasure from music; but the sentiment, as apart from the science of the art, he evidently regarded in a different way. He tells us that he revered the fine organ playing of Mr. Novello, and equally admired the singing of his daughter, and he mentions a couple of songs which never failed "to thrill the soul of Elia."

There even seems to have been about him a trace of the Johnsonian suspicion—a suspicion that there lurked within his breast an undeveloped faculty for the art of sweet sounds. Strumming in his own wild way on the piano of a friend while the latter was engaged in an adjoining room, the gentle Elia managed to secure a compliment for himself in the remark of the said friend that he “thought it could not be the maid!” On his first surprise at hearing the keys touched in a somewhat “airy and masterful way,” the gentleman of the house, not dreaming of his visitor, had suspected Jenny. “But a grace snatched from a superior refinement soon convinced him that some being, technically perhaps deficient, but higher informed from a principle common to all the fine arts, had swayed the keys to a mood which Jenny, with all her less cultivated enthusiasm, could never have elicited from them.” Many a one has experienced with Lamb the feeling that the opening of a concert may be “vastly lulling and agreeable,” whereas the end may be but languor and oppression. It is as if Music made her first insinuating approach like the comings of that melancholy so well described by the ancient Burton. “Those insufferable concertos” were the special detestation of Elia. Words were to him something: but to be exposed to an endless battery of mere sounds; to be long a-dying; to lie stretched upon a rack of roses; to keep up languor by unintermitted effort; to pile honey upon sugar and sugar upon honey to an interminable sweetness; to fill up sound with feeling, and strain ideas to keep pace with it; to gaze on empty frames, and be forced to make the pictures for yourself; to read a book *all stops*, and be obliged to supply the verbal matter,—these were faint shadows of what Lamb says he underwent when listening to “the ablest executed pieces of this empty instrumental music.” But, after all, what can be expected of a man who, according to his own confession, practised “God save the King” all his life, whistling and humming it over to himself in solitary corners, and yet in the end not arriving “within many quavers of it,” whatever that may mean?

Pope is reported to have said in conversation that he knew nothing of pleasure from music. “My friend Dr. Arbuthnot speaks strongly of the effect music has on his mind, and I believe him,” he said; “but I own myself incapable of deriving any pleasure from it.” Swift was no more privileged than Pope. He was by no means complimentary to the musical people of his time, but in reality he could never distinguish between one tune and another. Warton, in his *Life of Dr. Bathurst*, says that the Doctor had a strong aversion to music; and Johnson tells us that to John Philip Barretier a musical sound was but the source of an unpleasant sensation. Voltaire is another of whom something similar has been reported. “He would sit,” says Goethe, “with a discontented face while music was going on”; but here we shall have to admit that perhaps the music as much as Voltaire’s soul was at fault. It is just possible that the class of composition to which the French philosopher was sometimes doomed was such that it would have been a greater proof of his want of musical capacity if he had listened to it with anything but a discontented face!

It was Dean Hook who said that Handel’s *Messiah* had done more than all the sermons in Christendom to turn men to righteousness, and yet the Dean’s own knowledge of music consisted of only two tunes: one he said was the National Anthem, and the other—he did not remember! Charles Kingsley confides to us that of music he knew nought, although he says he liked it, and was wont to remark, “It is such a fine vent for the feelings.” He once told the students of the Berkeley University in California that music was necessary to the rounding and finishing of a perfect character—a statement which was enough to make Lord Chesterfield turn in his grave. Sydney Smith can hardly have been a satisfactory superior for an organist who desired to furnish, say, the Lenten services with appropriate music. He always felt unnerved and depressed by a composition in a minor key, and to such an extent was this the case that he is said to have forbidden the introduction of such music into the services whenever he was in residence at St. Paul’s! Yet he was an undoubted lover of the art. He often remarked, “If I were to begin life again, I would devote much time to music. All men of music seem to be happy; it is the most engrossing pursuit, almost the only innocent and unpunished passion.” He was very fond of singing, and found this a pleasant diversion after his work was over. He was slow in learning a song, but when once he had got hold of the melody he warbled it forth very correctly and sweetly. Dean Stanley, with all his culture, had no ear for music; and Dr. Arnold was also quite deficient in musical taste. “I can no more remedy the defect,” he says, “than I could make my mind mathematical, or than some other men could enter into the deep delight with which I look at a wood anemone or a wood sorrel.”

Samuel Rogers, the banker-poet, was a great lover of music, and went the length of indulging in the extraordinary luxury of having an Italian organ-grinder playing in the hall during dinner—perhaps on the Miltonian principle that music “would not be inexpedient during meals to assist and cherish nature in her first concoction, and send the mind back to study in good tune and satisfaction.” Milton, by the way, seems to have practised what he preached, for in the account of his day’s occupation we find that his custom was after dinner to take a tune on the organ and sing, or hear another sing. This reminds one of Sir Thomas More, who argued that “large food and rest bring diseases both of bodie and minde,” and enjoined among other exercises for his servants “musicke, both song and instrument,” encouraging them “to doe honour to God’s service” by his own example,—“Yea, when he was Lord Chancellor, sitting and singing in the quire with a surplice on his backe.” To the saintly Herbert music was a fountain of perpetual sweets, and his poems are full of allusions to it. “His chiefest recreation,” says Walton, “was music, in which heavenly art he was a most excellent master, and did himself compose many divine hymns and anthems, which he set and sung to his lute and viol; and though he was a lover of retiredness, yet his love to music was such that he went usually twice every week, on certain appointed days, to the Cathedral

Church in Salisbury, and at his return would say that his time spent in prayer and cathedral music elevated his soul, and was his heaven upon earth."

No poet was ever gifted with a more sensitive organisation for music than Moore. Professor Ella gives it as his opinion that if he had received a thoroughly sound musical education he might have produced "some great composition as gorgeous in melody and harmony as the Eastern imagery of his 'Lalla Rookh.'" He had a genuine liking for the music of Haydn and Mozart, but confessed that the fine, serious music of the cathedral writers left him untouched. One hardly knows what to say of Carlyle after his insult to our profession on a memorable occasion. When he was introduced to Dr. Joachim, he simply remarked, "I have no great opinion of musicians; they seem such a vain, windbaggy sort of people." This would, at any rate, please my correspondent of the other week, the afore-mentioned literary leader. But seeing it was Carlyle who declared "the most disagreeable of all noises" to be "the speech of angels," we may very well allow his opinion of us to pass, although there is no reason why the musicians should not pass their verdict on the Sage by way of a return compliment.

Darwin's freedom from scientific bigotry was surely never better shown than in that charming story told in his biography. Having being informed—by some wag, it may be suspected—that music had an influence on growing plants, he procured somebody to play a bassoon for several days close to some growing beans! He had himself a true love of good music, though he could boast of no more "ear" than Elia himself. On one occasion he was present at a service in King's College, Cambridge, when a very beautiful anthem was sung. At the close of the composition, which he had found to be exceedingly impressive, he turned to a friend who was beside him, and, with a deep sigh, said, "How's your backbone?" It seems, he frequently spoke of a feeling of coldness or shivering in his back on hearing beautiful music. George Eliot, as all the world knows, was very fond of music, and, like Browning, was a regular attendant at the "Pops." She had pianoforte lessons from Mr. Simms, the veteran organist of St. Michael's, Coventry, and probably Rosamond Viney's teacher in "Middlemarch" may be accepted as a faithful portraiture of him.

And now what more need be said? Can we affirm that all literary men like music and take an interest in it? Nay, not any more than we can affirm that all musical men like literature and take an interest in books and bookmen. Wagner himself complained that by nobody was he so completely misunderstood and misrepresented as by his literary eulogists, who wrote rhapsodies about his music in which there was neither sense or meaning. There is a moral lurking about that declaration, and I leave it to be applied in the right direction. We don't *all* love literature, but a great many of us do, and there will be vast additions to the number in the near future. Let us hope that the love is and will be more genuine than can have been that of the hero of the following little story, with which this rambling paper may be closed. George III.,

as we know, was very fond of music, both when his mind was affected and before. Once, urging Lord North to be present at a State concert, he said, "Your brother always attends." "Ah! but," was the reply, "Your Majesty forgets that my brother is deaf!"

The Power of Music.

By A. J. WARNER.

OH the rapturous charm of music! What power it has to soften, melt, enchain in its spirit-chords of subduing harmony! Truly there is power in music—an almost omnipotent power. It will tyrannise over the soul. It will force it to bow down and worship; it will wring adoration from it, and compel the heart to yield its treasures of love. Every emotion, from the most reverent devotion to the wildest gushes of frolicsome joy, it holds subject to its imperative will. It calls the religious devotee to worship, the patriot to his country's altar, the philanthropist to his generous work, the freeman to the temple of liberty, the friend to the altar of friendship, the lover to the side of his beloved. It elevates, empowers, and strengthens them all. The human soul is a mighty harp, and all its strings vibrate to the gush of music.

Who does not know the softening power of music, especially the music of the human voice? It is like the angel-whisperings of kind words in the hour of trouble. Who can be angry when the voice of love speaks in song? Who hears the harsh voice of selfishness and brutalising passion, when music gathers up her pearly love-notes to salute the ear with a stray song from paradise? Sing to the wicked man, sing to the disconsolate, sing to the old, sing to the sufferer, and sing to the children, for music will inspire them all. The human voice is the most perfect musical instrument ever made; and well it might be, for it had the most skilful Maker. The voice should be cultivated to sing the tones of love to man and God. Around the fireside, in the social circle, it should sing the voice of love, and at the altar of God it should pour forth melodious praise.

What is sweeter than the songs of innocent childhood, so refining, so refreshing, so suggestive of heaven? Music sweetens the cup of bitterness, softens the hand of want, lightens the burden of life, makes the heart courageous, and the soul cheerfully devout. Into the soul of childhood and youth it pours a tide of refining influence. It breathes like a miracle of inspiration through the soul, to elevate, refine, and spiritualise.

Music is an accomplishment, and very valuable as a home enjoyment, as rallying round the piano the various members of a family, and harmonising their hearts, as well as their voices, particularly in devotional strains. We know no more agreeable and interesting spectacle than that of brothers and sisters playing and singing together those elevating compositions in music and poetry which gratify the taste and purify the heart, while their parents sit delighted by. We have seen and heard an elder sister thus leading the family choir, who was the soul of harmony to the whole household, and whose life was a perfect example. Parents should

not fail to consider the great value of home music. Buy a good instrument, and teach your family to sing and play; then they can produce sufficient amusement at home themselves, so the sons will not think of looking elsewhere for it, and thus often be led into dens of vice and immorality. The reason that so many become dissipated and run to every place of amusement, no matter what its character, making every effort possible to get away from home at night, is the lack of entertainment at home.

Some years ago some twenty thousand people gathered in the old Castle Garden, New York, to hear Jenny Lind sing, as no other songstress ever had sung, the sublime compositions of Beethoven, Handel, and others. At length the Swedish Nightingale thought of her home, paused, and seemed to fold her wings for a higher flight. She began with deep emotion to pour forth "Home, Sweet Home." The audience could not stand it. An uproar of applause stopped the music. Tears gushed from those thousands like rain. Beethoven and Handel were forgotten. After a moment the song came again, seemingly as from heaven, almost angelic. "Home," that was the word that bound as with a spell twenty thousand souls, and Howard Payne triumphed over the great masters of song. When we look at the brevity and simplicity of this home song, we are ready to ask, What is the charm that lies concealed in it?

Music is healthful. There is no better cure for bad humours, and no medicine more pleasant to take. One of the greatest attractions for old and young, when visiting our cities, is the music that may be heard there.

Why should the farmer's household not be as cheerful, as full of pleasure, as that of the merchant or professional man? We know of nothing more genial and heart-warming than to hear the whole family joining in a hymn or song. They will love each other and their home the better for it. Songs learned in childhood are like birds nestling in the bosom; their notes will be heard and loved in after-years. The hymn sung by a mother to her little boy may in after-days be a voice that will recall him from ruin. No family can afford to do without music. It is a luxury and an economy; an alleviator of sorrow, and a spring of enjoyment; a protection against vice and an incitement to virtue. When rightly used, its effects, physical, intellectual, and moral, are good.

"Music hath charms to soothe the savage breast." Show me a family where good music is cultivated, where the parents and children are accustomed often to mingle their voices together in song, and I will show you one where peace, harmony, and love prevail, and where the great vices have no abiding-place.

There is no successful church or Sabbath-school organisation but what have good music; and good music is one of the principal features of their services. You will find it true that, if you will fill your churches with good music, you will fill them with people. Music is one of God's greatest gifts to man. Electric wires, railroads, and steamships make the whole world one city, but the vibrations of music produce the only electric current that binds earth with heaven. Who can comprehend the power of Music?—*The Song Friend*.

The London Sunday School Choir.

THE twentieth annual festival of this choir took place at the Crystal Palace on Wednesday, June 29th. Fortunately the severe thunderstorm of the previous night had cleared away, and the air was comparatively cool.

In the morning about five thousand juveniles mustered on the orchestra, and went through a very interesting and attractive programme with much success. Mr. Rowley conducted, and Mr. Horace Holmes was at the organ.

In the afternoon the great orchestra was again filled with senior scholars and teachers, and their performance was listened to by a large audience. We were glad to notice that there was a larger number of tenors and basses than usual; consequently the choir was more evenly balanced. The singing was hearty and expressive, and from beginning to end was very successful. The attack was a little feeble occasionally, and one or two slips were observable; but looking at the character of the music that was sung and the age of the singers, the general result was thoroughly creditable to all concerned. The two hymns "Forward! be our watchword" and "Jesu, my Lord, my God, my all" were very tastefully given. Goss's "Behold, I bring you good tidings" and Callcott's "Thou visitest the earth" were much appreciated. The choruses "How lovely are the messengers" and "Hallelujah, Amen" were a little unsteady, especially the latter, for which the orchestra were chiefly to blame.

Of the secular pieces "Sleep, baby, sleep," a charming part-song by Elizabeth Stirling, was admirably rendered and encored. The other items were well given, especially "The Owl" and "Summer and Winter."

The band of the choir, assisted by the Crystal Palace Orchestra, added to the interest of the programme by playing several pieces, the overture "Bohemian Girl" being loudly applauded.

Mr. Luther Hinton occupied his usual place as conductor with his accustomed ability, and Mr. David Davies presided at the organ with excellent judgment.

HOW LONG MUST EXERCISES BE PRACTISED?—There exists an erroneous idea that the practice of exercises is only necessary during the process of developing skill and execution, and that after these have been acquired, the exercises may be altogether dispensed with, as having accomplished the purpose for which they were intended. The question has often been asked, "During how long a period must exercises be practised?" or, "When shall I attain that point at which it will no longer be necessary to practise exercises?" Such questions indicate a misapprehension of the nature of exercises and of the reason for their practice, and a reply something like the following is pertinent, viz.: As it would be absurd to expect that by eating and drinking enough in childhood, one could dispense with the necessity of food after a certain number of years, so it is unreasonable to think that the practice of exercises for developing and strengthening the fingers can be laid aside after a certain point is reached. Exercises are as daily bread to the muscles and sinews, and, as it is desirable to bring up and keep the hand in the best possible condition, they must be practised every day, from childhood to old age. It is the natural tendency of things unused to deteriorate—to become rusty, so to speak, and fall into decay; and if the fingers are left without proper discipline and employment for a time, they will become stiff and unwieldy. In early stages, and during the acquirement of a technique, more practice is necessary than at a later period. When the muscles have been thoroughly trained, a comparatively small amount of practice will keep them in a healthy and efficient condition.

Church Music in Fiji.

A CORRESPONDENT writes as follows:—

The last Sunday I spent in Fiji I made up my mind to go and see how they conducted divine service. The church I found to be a good weather-board building with an iron roof, capable of seating about four hundred people. To my natural surprise I saw no seat of any description, and found that the congregation sat on the floor in true native or, as we say, tailor fashion. But a greater novelty met me outside the door in the shape of a substitute for church bells. On the ground were placed two wooden troughs, one about 12 feet and the other 6 feet, cut out of the trunk of a tree. At each trough stood a native with a billet of hard wood in each hand; with these they played a sort of tattoo on the edges of their troughs, the differences in the size of the trough causing different sounds, and being played with a strict regard to time, produced a sort of wild music, which could be heard to a great distance, as they were placed on top of a hill. On entering the church, the people bow themselves to the ground, touching the ground with their foreheads in true Oriental style; then they squat down in rows; and what with the white souleys (loincloths), the rich copper colour of their skins, and their enormous heads of hair like a halo of glory round them, they form a very interesting picture. Their singing greatly took my fancy, and I will try and give you some idea of it. The teacher reads a verse, and then the clerk (as we should call him), who seems to be chosen for the high pitch of his voice, somewhere up in the roof; and it appeared to me that they were seated according to their voices, getting deeper and deeper as they got to the back, and that they joined in the tune a row at a time; and as the Fijian has a voice of wonderful compass, the gradual swelling of the music, till it reached a volume of sound wonderfully grand and musical, was something enchanting. The whole of the service was conducted in a sincere, decorous manner.

S. G. H.

MUSIC IN THE HOME.—It is passing strange that people do not make greater use of vocal and instrumental music to brighten the home-life. Too many look upon it as a means of earning a livelihood, when there are thousands of homes where it is needed for its purifying and elevating influences. There is no place where it is more important and nowhere else does it shine with brighter lustre. Even if there be no very marked talent in this direction which would lead to the idea of display before the public, it is well worth while to make the most of such as there be, and those parents who ignore music because the son or daughter may give no promise of eminence as musicians are sadly in error. If right views concerning this subject could generally prevail, we should hear less of wailing because young people incline to spend their evenings away from home amid excitements which are not for their best good; and we steadfastly believe many a hearthstone is shrouded in gloom simply from neglecting the wonderful power which might have been wielded through music, in making home more attractive and filling it with sunshine. Among the great reforms needed in our land to-day, few are of equal importance with that of making home-life more pure, beautiful, and attractive.

The Aim of the Vocal Amateur.

BY JOSEPHINE RAND.

It is my intention to treat the subject generally, not exceptionally, and to try especially to bring forward some points of vital importance to the attention of teachers and students alike, feeling that they should be sympathetic and co-operative in their labours. The aim of the amateur in vocal work is open to earnest and sincere criticism.

One of the most serious obstacles to progress with which the teacher has to contend is the unreasonable eagerness of pupils to become artists at a bound. The young man or woman who enters upon the student's career in vocal work has, almost without exception, no appreciation of the amount of labour required in order to become, even in a small degree, an artistic singer.

The ability to sing is universally considered a very desirable accomplishment. In very many instances, it is sought merely as an accomplishment, or to gratify a personal love of the art itself; but in the majority of cases, young students are aspirants for musical fame, filled with high hopes of a brilliant professional career which shall be eminently successful, both artistically and financially. These imaginative minds, before becoming acquainted with the first principles of tone-production, picture to themselves the glories of the near future, when admiring audiences shall shower plaudits upon their heaven-gifted heads, and the domes of concert-hall, church, or opera-house shall resound to their phenomenal rendition of great and stirring compositions. Be not offended, my young friends. Who of us has not cherished like ambitions? And, after all, what would be accomplished were it not for this vivid, hopeful, glowing imagination, through the medium of which our mechanical powers are brought to realise their highest development? The thought I would utter is this: The wanderings of an unbridled fancy take the precedence of the all-essential conditions of success—hard work, intelligent research, and persevering application. To these we must not forget to add a certain amount of natural ability; but a special talent for music, though a great gift in itself, needs to be developed, and must not be relied on as all-sufficient.

Singing as a science is not generally cultivated. If there be a fairly good voice, it is too often considered the only essential thing, and that a superficial knowledge of a few Italian cavatinas, the principal airs from the oratorios, together with an acquaintance with the sentimental songs of the day, comprise a *répertoire* sufficient for any singer who does not contemplate a professional career in grand opera. Young singers, whether expecting to remain in the ranks of the amateurs, or striving after professional honours, are impatient to study the most difficult operatic selections without sufficient preparation, and are ambitious to surprise their friends by what they consider their rapidly acquired powers of execution, supposing such exhibitions to evince a very high degree of voice-culture, when, in reality, the voice itself may be, and very often is, in its most crude condition.

There are many, many students who have high-

priced teachers and musical privileges who, even after considerable so-called study, are utterly unable to sing a straight scale with a pure quality of tone, or to demonstrate the uniformity of voice, both so essential to the artistic rendition of any composition, be it simple or intricate. The trouble lies, in the first place, with the teachers, many of whom do not make voice-culture a specialty, or, indeed, give it any attention whatever; and, secondly, as I have said, with the pupils, whose inordinate ambition is a mighty obstacle to their own progress.

What should be done to remedy this evil? To begin with, there should be perfect honesty of purpose and of dealing between teacher and pupil. Pupils come to be *taught*. Who shall tell them what they need to know if not the teachers who have advertised their abilities in that direction? Many beginners do not know whether they have voices worth cultivating or not; they come to find out, and to be advised as to the probabilities of their ever becoming fairly proficient in any one line of voice-work. Let the teachers see to it that in this respect they are true to their honest convictions and to the confidence which the pupil naturally reposes in them.

As a general thing, voices that have never been cultivated need a certain amount of development before it is possible to tell for what they are best fitted. In other words, the possibilities of a voice must be ascertained, and the general powers of the student well understood, before the direct and definite aim can be safely determined. The teacher should help the pupil to an understanding of his or her abilities, and with all kindness, yet sincerity, point out the impossibilities as well as the probabilities.

When pupils become acquainted in some degree with the requirements of an intelligent artist, and become convinced of the amount of labour that must be performed in order to become one, there is a chance of their exchanging their foolish ideas for wise ones, and their visionary aims for those which hold the possibility of attainment thereto. It is a great mistake for pupils, who do not have any reasonable expectations of becoming professional singers, to strive after what may be unattainable as regards power, extended compass and facility of execution, when, in their own sphere, there is such a large field for labour, where they might achieve success—artistic success at that—and be adding their mite, and not a small one, to the sum total of human happiness and enjoyment. If they could but realise that the word "artist" does not necessarily imply a professional opera-singer, they might be encouraged to make the most of their modest abilities, and to employ to advantage the time which otherwise is utterly wasted in contending for what must ever remain beyond them. It is possible for an amateur to be an artist, and a great artist. Let pupils but appreciate this fact, and the first point is gained. To the teachers must pupils look for instruction, not only in the art of singing, but in the development of their powers of judgment and discrimination, whereby they may be enabled of themselves to think justly, to choose wisely, and to act successfully. Great, indeed, are the responsibilities of teachers.

Voice-culture means infinitely more than learning to

sing songs. Do all teachers realise this and act accordingly? Do not many of them take beginners and allow them to study songs after a lesson or two, and even, in some cases, at the very first lesson? Yes; and not a word is said about the management of the breath with regard to tone-production, or the quality of the voice being dependent upon the observance of physiological laws. I think this is entirely wrong, and students are unconsciously influenced to disregard the fundamental principles of the art of singing, upon which the true development of the voice is based.

A knowledge of breathing, and of dressing so as to render natural breathing possible; an understanding of the laws governing the general health, upon which voice depends; an appreciation of pure tone and the ability to produce it in a natural, correct manner; uniformity of voice throughout its entire compass; distinct articulation, perfect pronunciation, and an automatic control of the technics of singing,—all these things are necessary to each and every student before song-singing is attempted. Under such conditions, the singer will be able to give attention to the idea embodied in the song, and to give it expression in the soul's own language.

A singer needs to have his forces under immediate command. This can be gained only by judicious preparation, systematic drill, and intelligent practice. There must be method in the practice; and right here lies the best of the ability of the teacher. Can he do for this, that, and the other voice what he knows needs to be done, and produce results of which his own cultivated ear can heartily approve? If not, he is incompetent as a voice trainer. No one has the right to advertise as such whose knowledge of the art pertains only to the *rendition* of musical composition after an approved style. Let such a one advertise only that department of which he is master, and send beginners to some teacher who excels in imparting a correct and definite method for the use and control of the voice itself. This control must be first acquired, and then every step taken toward applying it to the higher branches of vocal art is a step gained.

This vocal preparation is necessary to the artistic rendition of any song, however simple, and I would have our singers realise this, and with patience strive to acquire it. Moreover, I would have them come to know that more real gratification and pure enjoyment are afforded by the soulful singing of a lovely ballad than by the display of vocal pyrotechnics, which, though dazzling, can never satisfy the heart. Above all, would I have our amateurs abandon the idea that they must sing in Italian in order to be appreciated, or to prove that they are cultivated singers. The Italian language is certainly unsurpassed for the purposes of song, but to neglect our own mother-tongue in the manner which we do is a disgrace to our profession. It is rare that a singer, even among so-called artists, renders an English song in a creditable manner, so that the words are intelligible to an audience. There is no use in trying to understand the average church choir; and in the concert-hall it is often impossible to tell, if the selection be an encore and not on the programme, whether the singer is warbling in French, Italian, or English. It is a grievous fault. I beg of

you who are studying singing for any purpose whatsoever, and are in any way interested in the art for art's sake—I beg of you, for the credit of yourself, your art, and your country, that you learn to pronounce your English, and to sing it as you should speak it, intelligibly and understandingly. Study it, practise it, court it. Woo it in all its soft shadings, its exquisite word-paintings, as embodied in the masterpieces of the great writers and orators. Become acquainted with it, which means to love it, and then thank God that you are blest with a goodly heritage, the speech of your fathers, the mother-tongue of your people, the poetic, the beautiful, the dignified, the sublime English language!

Further, let me add a few words of advice for the special benefit of the young, the ambitious, and the impatient.

You would like to accomplish great things at the start. This is impossible. In music, as in other things, there is a great deal to be learned, and you must *know* in order to *do*. Ignorance is weakness, while knowledge is strength. The mere desire to be an artist will avail you little in place of taking the necessary steps in order to become one. There is no royal road. Wishes have no wings save those of the imagination. Neither do they take root of themselves and bear fruit. If you would reap you must sow. No harvest can you expect from the untilled ground, barren of seed and cultivation. "Expect dividends on your deposits." Be not impatient for great results; they come but as the consequences of judicious efforts. Study your own powers. If you know you have talent, cultivate it in the face of any and all obstacles. Be not discouraged. If there is anything in you, it is bound to manifest itself sooner or later, and barriers and discouragements will but serve to develop your strength and to bring out undreamed-of powers which else had lain dormant.

Whatever your aim, be it to sing merely for your own and your friends' pleasure at home, or to attain to honours in higher flights, be sure to do well whatever you undertake, be it far less in quantity than you could wish.

If you study singing from the standpoint of an amateur only, cultivate your voice on physiological principles, the same as for professional work, for upon them its health, beauty, and endurance depend.

Then study the standard compositions of the best writers and aim to comprehend them. Sing the songs which lie within your ability to render well. Sing with your heart and soul, as well as voice, and while cultivating a noble taste for a high class of music, do not neglect the simple home-songs and the sweet old melodies, which yet are never old because eternally beautiful. Is your sphere a narrow one? Not so; it is limitless. You cannot measure your power to do good, to shed brightness, to bless loving and beloved friends, to elevate the tastes of companions, and to glorify art itself by your attainments, unassuming though they may be. Awake to your possibilities, and do what you can to prove that, as an amateur, you merit the hearty commendation of all true musicians, and all who, with you, are striving to elevate the standard of art in this country.

If, on the other hand, you desire to be a teacher, study those branches for which you have a natural inclination and taste; make a specialty of some department; master the subject so that you can conscientiously claim to be able to impart such special knowledge; be what you claim to be, and never cease to continually enlarge your sphere of usefulness by accumulating more and more knowledge, and turning it to a practical account in every-day work. Cultivate a broad mind. Be willing to learn from others, and to acknowledge frankly the receipt of a valuable idea. Be generous in your praise of others, when such praise is well earned and deserved. Trample on envy, jealousy, and ill-feeling as on evil weeds, which choke the growth of nobler life and are always offensive. Abolish conservatism. Diversify your ideas; do not bottle them up and put on a price at so much an idea. Sow the good seed, not sparingly, but with an open hand; not grudgingly, but with a full heart and the desire to behold an abundant harvest from the feeding of the multitude. Do this, and you will succeed; all the secret is—first knowledge, then action. Remember

"Kingdoms there are for all of us, maybe,—
But every kingdom opens with a key."

The Voice.

Echoes from the Churches.

(Paragraphs for this column should reach us by the 20th of the month.)

METROPOLITAN.

BAYSWATER.—On Monday, the 4th ult., in Queen's Road Chapel Schoolroom, Mr. David M. Davis, the conductor of the Western Division of the London Sunday School Orchestra, was presented by the members with a handsome silver-mounted bâton as a token of their appreciation of his services. Mr. Davis suitably acknowledged the gift, and expressed the pleasure he felt in conducting their rehearsals and performances, and wished the members to endeavour in every way to make the ensuing session still more successful. Addresses were given by Messrs. Bowser, Brewer, and J. P. Sinclair, and the final rehearsal thus terminated in a very social meeting.

HACKNEY.—The Rev. J. De Kewer Williams, the esteemed pastor of the Old Gravel Pit Chapel, entertained the members of his choir at Broxbourne on Saturday, the 9th ult. After much enjoyment in the beautiful and well-kept gardens and grounds of the Crown Hotel, the party sat down to a well-served dinner provided by the pastor, whose presence was a pleasure and delight to all. After dinner a hearty vote of thanks, proposed by Mr. C. M. Cox (the conductor of the choir), supported by Messrs. W. H. Dawson and H. Weston, was accorded to Mr. Williams, coupled with a hope that he may be long spared to preach the good news of salvation. The pastor expressed his appreciation, and thanked the choir for their services as co-workers with him for so many years, and commented on the harmony that had always existed in the choir apart altogether from their musical abilities. Mrs. Cox, in the name of the choir, asked the pastor to accept a beautiful bouquet of roses and other choice flowers. After further outdoor enjoyments, the choir sang some glees and part-

songs from the Palace Book of N. C. U. 1891-92, which brought to a close the thirteenth annual outing, which will long be remembered by all present.

WALWORTH.—On Tuesday, June 28th, a new two-manual organ, containing twenty-three stops, and built by Messrs. P. Conacher & Co., was opened in Walworth Road Baptist Chapel, when Mr. E. Minshall gave a recital. Miss Millie Inder gave a tasteful rendering of "O rest in the Lord," and Miss Helen M. West was very successful in "Father of heaven." "The Chorister," by Mrs. F. Battley, and "Arm, arm, ye brave," by Mr. W. H. West, were much appreciated. The pastor, the Rev. W. J. Mills, presided. The spacious chapel was quite full, and the collection amounted to £28.

PROVINCIAL.

RUNCORN.—On Thursday, the 14th ult., the new organ in the Congregational Church was opened by Mr. E. Minshall, who gave a recital. The instrument, which contains twenty stops, was built by Mr. A. Monk. Mr. Bantock Pierpoint sang with his well-known ability "Shall I in Namre's fertile plains" (Handel); "O God, have mercy" (Mendelssohn), and "Nazareth" (Gounod), the latter being encored. Mr. R. W. Pierpoint gave a brilliant rendering of "The Lost Chord" as a cornet solo. The choir, under the able direction of Mr. W. Handley, sang with much precision and taste "Praise the Lord" (Hall), "O clap your hands" (Stainer), and "The glory of the Lord" (Goss).

WOKING.—The choir of the Baptist Congregational Church, though not yet two years of age, is doing very good work. Since its formation, it has given several successful concerts, rendered assistance at various special services and meetings, and raised the money for the purchase of the necessary books and music. The service of song has been greatly improved, and anthems introduced, Parts II. and III. of the "Congregational Church Hymnal" being the collection used. It is intended that a chant and anthem be sung in each service, but at present only anthems are taken. An organ is sorely needed; but as the finances do not justify immediate steps being taken, the old harmonium (though much the worse for wear) remains in possession. On special occasions a piano is used in addition. Mr. Ralph Taylor, the organist and choirmaster, has resigned, being advised to rest on Sundays for a time.

Correspondence.

(We shall be glad to receive communications from any of our readers on questions likely to be of general interest.)

A "CONTENTS BILL" FOR THE "NONCONFORMIST MUSICAL JOURNAL."

To the Editor of THE NONCONFORMIST MUSICAL JOURNAL.

DEAR SIR,—Now that you are giving music in every alternate month's issue, it is plainly to the interests of choirmasters and organists to persuade all members of their respective choirs to procure—beg, borrow, or buy—copies of the JOURNAL; for, by so doing, it is evident the choir are supplying themselves with good music without drawing on the choir funds, which, alas! are always too low.

I have often heard organists express regret that they cannot get their choir to take interest in anything beyond their own little world. Such remarks by occasional readers as, "Anything specially interesting this month?" or, "What's in the JOURNAL this month?" suggest to my mind that a small "Contents Bill" would be very useful, and its exhibition in practice rooms,

church lobbies, and such places, where so much apathy in their own welfare is manifested, would lead to an appreciable increase of its circulation.

Do you not think, sir, that a person's eye often catches sight of a favourite subject on a "Contents Bill" that "fetches them" on the spot?

If you find room for this letter, I would ask your readers, especially choir secretaries, to ply you with postcards during the current month, giving their views and saying if they will undertake to exhibit the "Bill" in a conspicuous place.—Yours, etc., A. B.

Reviews.

WE have received the following from Messrs. Novello & Co.:—

Original Compositions for the Organ, Nos. 146-152. —Organists will find some very useful and pleasing pieces amongst this series of compositions. No. 152, *Idyl*, by Hamilton Clarke, is a charming work, and easy also. No. 150, *Meditation*, by the same composer, is well written. No. 146, *March*, by H. Elliot Button, is bold and taking.

Transcription from Mendelssohn for the Organ. By George Calkin. Book VI.—This number contains "Andante con moto," from Symphony No. 1 in C; "My song shall be alway Thy mercy" (Hymn of Praise); and "Come, let us sing" (Psalm xcvi.),—all admirably arranged for the organ.

Biography. By W. H. Cummings.—This is one of the popular primers. It gives very briefly a few particulars of all the well-known musicians.

Organ Works of J. S. Bach. Edited by Bridge and Higgs. Book X.—This very useful and well-edited edition of Bach's organ works is deservedly popular with organists. The number before us contains seven pieces.

Progressive Studies. By G. Henschel. Parts I. and II., for a low voice. 4s. each.—Part I. contains studies in sustained singing, and Part II. studies in florid singing. Mr. Henschel has a great reputation both as a vocalist and as a teacher. Singers taking up these studies will therefore reap the benefit of great experience.

Three Dances from Henry VIII. By Edward German. 2s. net.—Three charming pieces.

Bagatelles for the Pianoforte. By Max Mayer. 2s. 6d. net.—The titles of a few of these exquisite and quaint little pieces will reveal their style: "A Romp and a Dance," "Cuckoo," "A Game of Tick," "Beauty and the Beast." Young performers will be much interested in these compositions.

Romance, No. 2. By Charles Dennis. (B. Williams, 19, Paternoster Row, E.C. 4s.)—A showy and brilliant composition.

The Organist's Magazine of Voluntaries, No. 8. (44, Fleet Street, E.C. 1s. 6d.)—This is a very attractive and useful number. It contains an introduction to, and six variations by, J. P. Attwater, on the well-known tune *Rockingham*. For a concluding voluntary or recital purposes, organists will find this piece very popular.

A Catechism. Book I. Containing some of the Elementary Parts of Music, also an Explanation of Stops that are used in the American Organ or Harmonium. By Newton Robinson. (Published at 7, Margaret Street, Pentre, Pontypridd. 6d.)—To beginners this little catechism will be helpful, more especially the portion devoted to the American organ.

To Correspondents.

J. B. T.—It is not published for the organ.

A. L.—Yes, you may, but it is hardly legitimate under the circumstances.

F. SMITH.—It is published in Novello's "Select Anthem" Series.

B. W. H.—We do not know of any one who would exchange with you.

VIVACE.—(1) Yes. (2) Yes. (3) No. (4) See our issue for April last.

THE following are thanked for their letters:—B. J. (Perth), W. S. (Bridlington), L. J. (Stoke Newington), D. M. S. (Denbigh), F. H. W. (Reading), N. O. S. (Wellington), F. A. (Derby), W. J. (Christchurch), B. E. (Blackburn), R. C. (Retford).

Staccato Notes.

SIR CHARLES HALLE has entered upon his fiftieth year as a concert-giver in this country.

SIR ARTHUR SULLIVAN is so much better that he hopes to conduct the Leeds Festival.

IN place of Mr. Cowen's new cantata the *Water Lily*, the *Golden Legend* will probably be given at Leeds.

DR. HARFORD LLOYD has been appointed Precentor of Eton in place of Mr. Barnby. The salary is about £1500 per annum.

SIMS REEVES has undertaken to teach singing at the Guildhall School of Music.

THE Royal English Opera House is to be turned into a music hall.

THE prospectus of the Hope-Jones Electric Organ Company, Limited, has been issued. The directors are Messrs. Thomas Threlfall (Chairman), G. A. Walls Beard, W. Creser, Mus. Doc., W. D. Hall, and R. Hope-Jones (Managing Director). The Secretary is Mr. F. B. Townend.

MR. JEAN DE RESZKE is again laid aside.

MISS MACINTYRE and Mr. Ben Davies sang before the Queen on the 14th ult.

THE Prince of Wales presided at the annual meeting of the Royal College of Music. A very satisfactory report was presented.

MR. CHARLES E. STEPHENS, the well-known and respected musician, died on the 15th ult.

MR. COWEN has resigned the Conductorship of the Philharmonic Society.

Accidentals.

NO SECOND FIDDLE.—There is a story told in Dublin that the late Lady C— (who, when Lady Mayoress, declared herself to be the "rankest" woman in the city) was requested by her friends, upon the occasion of her husband being knighted, to get up an orchestral concert in honour of the event. She acceded, and sent immediately for Mr. L—y, with whom she consulted upon the matter. "How will you manage it?" she asked eagerly. "How many fiddles shall we have?" "Well," said L—y, "I think I shall engage eight firsts and six seconds." "Stop!" said Lady C—. "None of your second fiddles for me. I have money enough to do it well. Let them all be firsts!"

SHE was having her voice tested by a singing master, and after a song she inquired,—

"Now, what would you advise me to do with my voice?"

"Nothing," he said in such a tone that she has been dumb ever since.

AN organist says that a cow moos in a perfect fifth, octave, or tenth; a dog barks in fifth or fourth; a donkey brays in a perfect octave; and a horse neighs in a descent on the chromatic scale.

"WHAT makes them get so mad at the end?" was the thoughtful question once put to me by a very young miss, referring to the usual musical racket at the finish of an overture.

IN the gloaming, O my darling,
When I come thine eyes to see,
Tie the dog up—tie him tightly—
Then I'll feel it safe for me.

WHEN Rubinstein was travelling through the western states on a concert tour, it chanced that Barnum's circus followed almost exactly the same route chosen by the great Russian. On one occasion, when the train was filled with snake-charmers, acrobats, clowns, and the like, the conductor, noticing, perhaps, Rubinstein's remarkable appearance, asked him, "Do you belong to the show?" Turning his leonine head, with a savage shake, Rubinstein answered fiercely, "Sir, I am the show!"

MR. MOVEOFT: "Well, my dear, how do you find the neighbours here—sociable?"

Mrs. Moveoft: "Very. Three or four of them have sent in to ask if I would allow their children to use our piano to practice on."

"AND what do you think of my daughter's playing, professor?" asked Mr. Pursey.

"Her method is good, and her phrasing is excellent; but what she lacks is technique."

"Why didn't you let me know of this before, professor? I'll order some right away. I'm determined that Fannie shall want for nothing that money can buy."

THE latest American story about Pachmann is that, seeing an advertisement in the newspapers to the effect that a lady would give first-class piano lessons for 25 cents, he went to her and took a lesson. It must have been a funny sight to see the little man with feigned stiff fingers learning a Chopin valse. "You have been taught very badly," said the teacher severely. "I know it," said De Pachmann meekly, "but I began too late in the day." Then he paid his 25 cents, and handed the lady his card. The name may have meant nothing to her, after all.

AN honest farmer was invited to attend a party at the village doctor's one evening, where there was music, both vocal and instrumental. On the following morning he met one of the guests, who said: "Well, farmer, how did you enjoy yourself last night? Were not the quartets excellent?" "Why, really, sir, I can't say," said he, "for I didn't taste 'em; but the pork chops were the finest I ever ate."

DR. MATHER BYLES, of by-gone days, thus describes the fugue:—

"Down starts the Bass with Grave, Majestic Air,
And up the Treble mounts with shrill Career;
With softer sounds, in mild melodious Maze
Warbling between, the Tenor gently plays,
And if th' inspiring Alto joins the Force,
See, like a Lark it Wings its towering Course;
Through Harmony's sublimest Sphere it flies,
And to Angelic Accents seems to rise."